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THE GRASS IN THE PAVEMENT.

The Grass in the Pavement

BY

M. E. BUHLER

||

"A child said, *What is the grass?*" (Walt Whitman).



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THE GRASS IN THE PAVEMENT.

THE DREAMER.

*SCORN not the dreamer, ye who strive
In busy marts the goal to win;
By other ways shall he arrive,
And other gates shall enter in.*

*In touch with nature's mysteries,
His is the heart that understands;
To paint the picture that he sees
His are the artist's skillful hands.*

*Like that far dreamer of Judaea,
Who, true of heart and wise of brain,
Was made Egyptian Pharaoh's seer
And saved the King's domain.*

*Up from the River crept the lean,
Long years across the desert sand;
Behold, the Dreamer rose serene
And fed the famished land!*

*So to the Seer the power is given,
And time fulfills the vision dim;
The Sun and Moon and Stars eleven
Bow down and worship him!*

THE GRASS IN THE PAVEMENT.

"God," cried the grass in the pavement,
"Am I not worthy of living,
Who am green in the waterless places
And subsist in the clefts of the stone?"

"Where the feet of the horses trample
And wheels go passing and passing,
By strong desire of living
I live, but am barren and lone!

"Give me the fields of my birthright,
The shade of the quiet cool places;
There may I live to Thine honor,
Abundant, rejoicing, full grown!"

"Child," came the Voice in the stillness,
"Know I not well thou art worthy,
Thou who declarest my glory
Where dearth and destruction are rife?

"Therefore have I set thee in lonely
And parched and desolate places:
Are the weakest and least of the legions
Placed in the van of the strife?

"Know I not well thou art worthy?
I have chosen thee over all others,
Thou who art potent, unyielding,
And strong in the fullness of life!"

BUBBLES.

SHATTERED in the primal
Warfare in the heavens,
Lo, the holy spirit
In mankind incarnate,
Lives in myriad fragments!

Prisoned, bound, and hapless
In discordant bodies,
Evermore it seeketh
Union, as the rivers
Seek again the ocean.

So in homes and cities
Drawn by strong attraction
Men foregather, blindly
Seeking one another,
In pathetic discord.

For the flesh dissevers
And the body prisons;
Yet the spirit striveth,
Bound, though never yielding,
Drawing men together;

Till the carnal housings
Weaker grow and finer,
With the strain of living
And the stress of being;
And like long blown bubbles,

Gorgeous, many colored,
Flashing with a radiance
Delicate, ethereal,
In a mist of glory
Burst at last asunder.

So the prisoned spirit
Quit of life and living,
Mingles with the ether.
With all other spirit,
And is one forever!

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IDOLATRY.

MY spirit flies from star to star
In search of thee, my all in all.
From star to star the shadows fall
And lie before me like a bar
Of darkness thrown by light afar
Beyond the spheres where thou must be;
And turning thither, seeking thee,
I find again the shadows are.

So deep the shade, so dark the spheres—
So darker, darker, one by one,
As on I pass, each star appears—
I know beyond the utmost sun,
Sun-shadowed, on my yearning sight
Thyself shall burst in dazzling light!

THE DUST.

I AM the dust, and I creep and crawl
In at the window and over the wall;
Over the pictures and over the books,
And gather to rest in the unswept nooks.

I am a part of all that has been,
Living or dead the world within;
Dissolved by time and freed by rust
To a million million fragments of dust.

Dust of the monarch and dust of his crown;
Dust of the cap and bells, and the clown;
Dust of the warrior and dust of his sword;
And dust of all of the hosts of the Lord.

Dust of the slayer and dust of the slain,
Dissolved in the whirling void again;
Dust of the women who gave them birth;
And dust of all living and dead of the earth.

Out in the farthest atmosphere
I float and drift as I drift in here;
Shining in rays of the uttermost stars
As I shine in the beams of the casement bars.

A LUNAR RAINBOW OVER BROADWAY.

I the old dead moon,
White in the sun
Back of the drifting clouds,
Look down upon
You and your teeming life,
O Babylon!

Jewelled in red and gold
Night after night,
Wheels your kaleidoscope
Of broken light,
Color of strife begot,
Peace being white.

So on these circling mists
Strange colors glow,
That speak of storm and stress
Long, long ago,
In the forgotten life
I used to know.

THE SHATTERING OF THE VESSELS.

IN the Hall of the Great Vases a rushing Wind
 went by,
And there fell to the earth a vessel,
Shattered in fragments.

Many-shaped, many-colored were the pieces,
According to the pattern of the vessel;
Some large, and some small,
But most of them as the dust of the pavement.

And men passing, said:
"Behold, the flocking of the birds!"
For there flew out across the world
Great and small birds,
And they that were as insects in Brazilian forests.

And again I beheld in the Hall of the Great Vases
That a mighty Wind swept by;
And there was blown to the earth an innumerable
 multitude of vessels,
Whose fragments, large and infinitely small,
Were as the motes in the Sunbeam,
Or the Zodiacal Light gathered about the Sun.

And behold, in all places of the earth,
The flocking of the birds!

Their songs filled the silences of great conflict,
And in the darkness of the nights was heard
The impalpable, soft beating of their wings.

The forest leaves rustled with their flitting,
The long grasses of the plains with their motion,
And over the waters the seagulls stooped to their
prey.

From solitary high places the eagles sought the sun;
And in the streets of the cities men paused in their
hurrying,
Stepping carefully,
Lest they trample upon little wings.

THE WISDOM OF THE FOOLISH.

AS falsely a fond mother promises
Her pleading child the thing for which he frets,
Knowing the while it never can be his,
Yet soothing with vain hope till he forgets;

So nature leads us an appointed way
With promise of the things our hearts implore,
Until by false hope drawn, at close of day
We have forgotten, and desire no more.

THE INSCRUTABLE GODS.

THEY make the fire to burn,
Yet keep the green wood wet;
And urging life to understand
They let it still forget.

For when we seek to learn,
They baffle and abet,
And make youth slow to understand
But slow, slow, to forget;

And when the long tides turn,
They urge and hinder yet;
For age, grown quick to understand,
Is quick, quick, to forget.

O strange gods, kind and stern,
That build and then upset,
What would you? Lest we understand
Too much, must we forget?

Or, seeing all fuels burn
To ashes, must we let
The soul flame on to understand.
But what it burns forget?

EARTHBOUND.

MANY fathoms deep I lie
Under Water, Earth and Sky;
I, the firstborn, primal Fire,
Buried deep by deep desire!
God, who called me from the void,
Shall I thus be self-destroyed?
Let me go back whence I came,
One with elemental flame!
Prisoned in these earthly walls,
Blinded, bound, my spirit calls.
What need I of mortal life,
All my soul with being rife?
What remains for me to learn,
Who lit Thy blazing suns to burn?
What remains for me to know,
Who set Thy circling tides to flow?
Is there aught for me to find
Who loosened Thine ethereal wind?
Need have I for mortal birth,
Who helped to swing Thy rounded earth?
Back of all the kalpas I
Knew the Wherefore and the Why.
God, who wrought me of desire!
God, who shaped my soul of fire!
I, the firstborn, wild and free,
First of all to answer Thee,
Why should I thus prisoned be?

THE TOWERS OF SILENCE.

IN the ancient city's shade
Roofless towers of granite rise,
Where the Parsee dead are laid
Uninterred beneath the skies.

Central in the circling walls
Lies a well, whose waters deep
Catch the sunshine as it falls
On the silence of long sleep;

Catch the brooding radiance cast
By the stars' supernal light,
And the planets wheeling past
In the swiftly turning night;

Catch the first long lingering ray
Out across the darkness whirled
By the white dawn, as the day
Wakes again the living world.

Yet shall not the vanished thought
To its temple come again;
Nor the crumbling bones be wrought
Into what had once been men.

A MEXICAN EXILE.

AMID the ruins of his ancient people
In the Museum waits Xochipilli,
Lord of the Flowers—with bud and blossom graven
From brow to naked knee.

With sunken eyes whose sad, far-seeing glances
Sweep through the casements open to the sky,
He sees, beyond a waste of restless waters,
An old world buried lie.

His spirit yearneth for the vanished nation,
Through all the desolate, slow-creeping hours,
That sought strange gods with sacrifice unholy
But unto him brought flowers.

Methinks the Lord Xochipilli beholdeth
A flowery land set deep in tropic seas;
And murmurously amidst the languorous sweetness
He hears the droning bees.

For where he broods high up amid the ruins
There wafts an incense as from Maya skies—
Strange hands have laid wild blossoms on his altar
In ancient sacrifice!

THE WORSHIPPER.

EVER have I been a worshipper
Of all the changing gods.

Strange beings in the twilight have I honored,
Whose remembrance has vanished from the earth.

To Ra have I given glory in the sunlight,
And praised him in the waters of the Nile.
On the peaks and in the deep caverns of Asia
I have bowed before the Dragon of the Sun,
And Siva sitting in darkness.

Yea, when the waters lay deep upon the continents
I worshipped Ea in Eridu;
And with the sunrise kneeled to Shamash in Sippara.
To Oannes, rising amid the islands of the sea,
Have I made obeisance;
And bowed down before Baal in Babylon.

Before Assur have I borne fire and water;
And lifted the Serpent in the wilderness,
Following Jehovah.

By winding rivers and by inland seas of the Kassites
Have I adored their strange gods;
And have come up out of long darkness singing of
Pharamond.

I have heaped the red fires of Moloch in the forests,
And razed them for the shrines of the White Christ.
Yea, I have chanted with the abbots in Appenzell.

In Britain and in Staffa have I builded sanctuaries;
And have vanished with the Druids of Stonehenge
And their beacon lights upon the Celtic hills.

Amid far waters I planted the True Cross beneath
the palm trees;
And held the crucifix to the lips of Montezuma;
By the long waves on a frozen shore
I sought the liberty of God, singing His mercies.
And now in these last days,
Behold, I fling His banner to the stars,
Giving glory unto the Highest,
World without end!

THE DEWDROP.

THE cycle of the dewdrop and the cycle of the
sea,
The smallest and the greatest, 'tis a question
of degree.
'Tis the same within the ocean and the drop of
water small;
And the dweller in the dewdrop has felt and known
it all,—
Yea, I, within my dewdrop, have felt and known
it all !

THE BUILDERS.

"EACH man's life
The outcome of his former living is."

So taught the nation by the summer seas,
Its mystic life philosophy a woof
Of breath of God and creeping things of earth,
Of dust and dross and gleaming threads of gold.

The Brahmin, musing with his eyes downcast
Upon the marvel of the many lives,
Saw in the crystal of the sunlit stream,
Topaz and amethyst and lazuli,
The shimmering fishes gliding to and fro,

And cried, "Behold, in lowly forms like these
Hath dwelt this human soul, ascending through
Strange shapes of bird and beast, each leaving trace,
While turns the ceaseless wheel. Lo, each man's life
The outcome of his former living is!"

Well hast thou seen, O seeker of the truth,
Well hast thou said, O seer of things that are!
From shape to shape through changes manifold
Our endless lives roll on in linked chains
Of deed and sequence, evil wrought and good;
And what we shall be doth not yet appear.

The deeds we wrought in all the vanished years;
The thoughts we harbored as the moments sped;
Things seen and heard and wondered at and felt;

Yea, all the life we lived from day to day,
Have fashioned us as we behold ourselves.

And still we grow and change, and build again
New lives from embers of forgotten days
That passing come no more; and each man's life
The outcome of his former living is.

INVICTUS.

WHO sang "Invictus" loud and long—and fell—
Doubt not thou sangest well!
For there are those who had not known that song
But for thy chanted word,
Which they, despairing, heard
And rose and triumphed; passing it along
Wave after wave in ever-widening arc,
Until the far reverberance of the strain
Comes back to thee again
Across the world; and mark,
O thou of mighty will,
Unconquered and unconquerable still,
Above the flesh that fails
The spirit still prevails,
And 'tis thine own first song that lifteth thee
To final victory!
Early or late
Thou rulest still thy fate,
Despite all winds or tides through all eternity.

THE UNBELIEVERS.

ONCE, in an age of magic, lived a man
Who blew a bubble of his glowing breath,
And dwelt therein.
And when the walls were thin
And straining as with coming death,
And lights unutterable whirled and ran
In flashing colors round the little span
Of prisoned breath, from out his shining cloud
He called to men aloud
To share with him the radiance he had caught
Circling about his thought.

So frail a thing—a bubble—from without,
That holds all life within!
An alien touch, a carping word, a doubt,
And all the crystalline
Bright lights that whirl and spin
About the central sun fire have gone out!

So strange is human life,
That holds each body central in a sphere
Invisible, yet rife
With every passion, prejudice and fear
That in the heart may be!
Long before men draw near
Their subtle atmosphere
Prepares the way for them, and rules what they
shall see.

And so the unseeing crowd
Slew, as they came, the bubble; laughing loud
At what themselves had made vacuity!

THE SYMPHONY.

GOD, musing, made the law, His instrument,
And set the wheels in motion with His word;
And law evolves the changing universe,
Self-moving, self-adjusting, self-sustained.

Law swerves not in its action, varying not
One jot nor one iota in its course;
It sets the whirling atoms in the deeps,
Fashioned upon the pattern of the suns,
And sows the empyrean with circling stars.

From unplumbed systems in the atom's depths
One method and one purpose govern all,
To that immeasurable and ultimate Star
Which is the sum of all the ordered spheres
That move in music round the Throne of God.

Wheel within wheel revolving ceaselessly
The mighty system followeth the law,
In one divine, unbroken harmony;
One, in the atom's boundless depths revealed;
One, in the framework of this earthly form;
One, in the Star of Heaven immeasurable!

THE WORKERS.

THE palace doors are closed upon the Mount,
For none may view the King who rules supreme
In wisdom, justice, mercy, and in power;
Designing and directing from his throne,
He wields unseen his sceptre over all.

Far, far below the summit of the Mount
The workers go their darkened way alone;
Ten thousand times ten thousand toiling lives
In one great image made and glorified,
And shaped to working as the Master works.

And instruments of marvelous design
Are ready waiting for the eager hands
Whereto they are adapted; yet few find,
Groping in darkness of the twilight world,
The instrument for which their hands were made.

So to the carpenter there falls a sword;
Unto the warrior a scrivener's reed;
To him born tiller of the soil a loom.
Unto the poet is a plowshare given,
And to the brute dominion and a throne.

But since a gleam of far celestial light
Breaks through some crevice in the palace doors,
The workers with their misfit instruments
And alien tasks accomplish yet some work,
Slowly and surely,—to their endless praise.

Yet some, grown bitter with their wasted strength,
Seeing the mighty things they could have wrought
Had there been no confusion of the tools,
Cry, "Who is this who sits enthroned in light,
Foiling his workers and his instruments?"

THE PURPOSE.

THEN spake One from His throne invisible
Beyond the lightnings in the steadfast light:
"Lo, who art thou, that I should mindful be
Of thee, or any deed thou mayst perform?
Need I thy help? Or in thy Babylon
Soars any tower too near unto My throne?"

"Behold, I AM, and all that shall be, was!
All thou wouldst make already hath been wrought,
All thou wouldst do already hath been done.
Know thou, O Man, My well beloved son,
Who wast with Me when sang the morning stars
And the foundations of the world were laid,
Not as a builder have I sent thee forth,
Nor as a laborer with implements,
But as the king's son goes to win his sword;
Achievement worthless but for battle fought
And for the strength of obstacles o'ercome.

"Lo! I have sent thee forth to overcome!
From every evil wresting victory,

From every conquest greater in thy might.
Up from the slimy ooze by slow ascent,
Through all the cycles of the countless years,
Thy vast dominion widens to the end,
Yea, that far end when, conquering death and hell,
I set thee at My right hand on the throne
In judgment o'er the world that I have made!"

"MAKER OF MEN"

THE Kindler of the Fire—

Doth He not know?
He lights the pure flame; higher, ever higher,
See, it will go!

He smiles—it is enough; and in the mire
All unrefreshed He leaves it to expire;
Its worth is proved; 'tis all He doth desire!
It hath no need to grow;
Doth He not know?

He lights the sullen spark
And breathes it to a glow;
He feeds it chaff and lightly kindling bark,
And makes it grow
Slowly, yea, inch by inch, until the dark
About its soul is lighted; He will mark
How it doth flicker, flare; His laughter hark!
What care is needed, lo,
Doth He not know?

THE MEDIATORS.

THOUGH He hath bidden to prayer in His word,
So often had I prayed and He not heard,
Being inscrutable and far away,
And hidden by flaming swords from such as pray!
And the great saints who touch His garment's hem,
Surely earth's myriad prayers o'erburden them.

So then I thought (perchance the thought were His,
And this but one of many mysteries),
Being beset with sharp and bitter need,
I will invoke mine own to intercede.
These I can reach; and, clothed in fire like Him,
They may pass through the ranks of seraphim.

Then called I, soul to soul, all those to me
Bound by strong chains of love and sympathy
And ties of kin that may not be denied.
The long, long dead came swiftly to my side
Across the gulf of the departed years,
And those for whom mine eyes wept bitter tears.

And from the knightly and the royal past
Far shadowy kinsmen gathered round me fast;
Yea, those of mine who had been strong to save.
All came at call across the deathless grave
In shapes of light, and bore beseeching word
Up past God's flaming footstool, and He heard!

THE CALL OF THE SIRE.

LO! one arose, breaking earth's bondage—
The law of the little children
That held him safe to her bosom—
And soared beyond her dominion
In search of his father, the sun.

But the great winds that follow earth's footsteps—
The devils that trail her in fleeing—
Shrieking and howling and hurling,
Reached from the outermost darkness
Their long arms to his undoing.

They deafened him with their roarings;
They blinded him with their blackness;
They rended him with their clutches;
And tossed him and whirled him and wheeled him,
And tore him apart and asunder.

So, cast in Osirian fragments
Over the wind blown spaces,
As meteors fall through the darkness
His members fall, never reaching;
But are caught back into the currents,
And are whirled in the vortex forever.

So I lay me down with my mother,
Safe in the arms of her keeping,
Wrapped in the robes that enfold her—

The crystalline robes of her being;
And fanned by her gentle zephyrs
Would sleep on her breast evermore.

But there is no rest in my slumber
Because of a voice that is calling:
"Rise, thou, and seek the adventure!
Perchance, though dismembered and shattered,
Some fragment tossed out by the tempest
Shall catch at the hands of the sun!"

THE SONG MAKERS.

SINGERS of earth, whose only gift is song.
Sing when the night is dark and over-long,
And by your music you shall make men strong!
Though wastes and solitudes encompass you,
Sing of brave deeds that keep the true men true,
And of the laurel much shall be your due!
The fires of God are nurtured in the dark
And blown to flame from that undying spark
That feeds the lyric of the unseen lark.
Sing—as at dawn amid Jamaican hills
Over far seas, the solitaire's sweet trills
Break forth, and earth with flute-like music thrills;
And even the great stars in the stooping skies
Burn with a whiter splendor; while arise
From mist-filled valleys notes of Paradise.

THE SPONGES.

THESE are the Children of Ocean, the least of
the great Sea People,
Born in her strange wild currents and rocked in
her surging tides,
Clinging to reef and coral and shaped to the form
of their moorings;
Blind in the dim green waters, they hide where the
mollusk hides.

Born of the Mother of all, with aeons of time yet
before them,
Naught they know of the sunlight—asleep 'neath
her storms and calms;
Soothed in the long, blind ages by the croon of her
wistful murmurs,
And shaped by her voice as the air shapes the
fronds of the wind-blown palms.

Who shall determine, O Man! the goal of thine in-
finite reaching,
Up from the lowest deeps where the uttermost
life hath birth?
Of fish and reptile and bird, of roaming Lord of the
Forest—
Rememberest aught in thy dreaming, O full-grown
Child of the Earth?

THE JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD.

THE dead man stood before the shadowy throne
Wherefrom the judgment of the dead is given,
And waited sentence calmly, unafraid,
Guiltless of evil deed in earthly life.
When lo! from out the judgment book was read
The doom of him who wasted, robbed, and slew!

"Nay, Lord," cried he bewildered, "when did I
These evil things whereof I am accused?
Sore, sore have I been tempted, but withstood.
From spoliation I withheld my hand,
And slew not, though my heart was hot with hate.
Riches have passed, and all that men desire
I have put from me for a blameless life;
And empty hands and broken heart attest
That I have passed through life without its gains."

Then spake in sorrow He who rules the dead:
"The spirit judge I; not the flesh of man
Which is subservient to the lord of life
And of the earth, in whom I have no part.
Lo! to the spirit what is its desire
It makes thereby its own! Wherefore I say,
Thou, who hast had so much in thy desire,
And in desire hast done so many ills,
Work out the punishment I mete to thee
So that these things shall tempt thee not again."

INVOCATION.

THEN cried I, "Lord, Thou Who hast bidden
me pray,

These many years have I by night and day
Petitioned Thee, and yet no answer known!
Art deaf or powerless on Thy distant throne?"

Then spake a low voice present in mine ear:
"Sayst that thou dost pray and I not hear,
I, Who am nearer than thy hand is near?
O thou, vociferous by night and day,
Art sure thou knowest what it is to pray?"

"I heed not windy words nor foolish tears,
And though thou seekest thus a thousand years,
A thousand years thou shalt unanswered be;
And yet I say, pray thou, and ceaselessly,
And what thou prayest shall be given to thee!

"Behold, I show thee a great mystery,
Who looking in thy soul shall there find Me;
Desire—with passion deeper than the sea;
Believe—that I, thy God, will uphold thee;
And in My name *command*—and it shall be!

"It shall be thine to set the captive free;
And thine to cast the mountain in the sea;
And thine to wreak slow vengeance day by day
Upon earth's mightiest, till, forlorn and gray,
On desolate thrones all hope is washed away!

“The sword is thine, and thine the healing touch,
O thou of strong desire, believing much!
And yet, lest judgment on thine own head fall,
Watch well thy prayer, for lo, I answer all!”

THE ARTIST.

AS 'mid far mountains lies some inland sea,
Within whose depths their mirrored peaks are
shown,
So still and clear the artist's soul must be
Amid the summits where it dwells alone.

The gentlest zephyr frets the mirroring wave,
The lightest discord mars the picture's worth.
Forlorn his being whom the vision drave
To be the loneliest creature upon earth!

A TWENTIETH CENTURY PRAYER.

LO! Thou hast made Thy flaming suns
And set them circling free in space;
And Thou hast made those darker ones
Outcast forever from Thy face,
Those wandering stars with quenched spark,
Lost in the blackness of the dark.

O Maker of each undimmed sun
In sole dominion o'er its spheres
That in their rounded orbits run
Serenely through the perfect years,
Look down in pity on our world
About two centres madly whirled.

Our world with pathway all amiss,
Misshapen by the central strife
Between the lords of woe and bliss,
Of dark and light, of death and life.
Help us, in these our latter days,
To search this darkness and its ways,

To find the pivot of the night;
And heal earth's guidance, rent in twain,
That brings into a world of light
Death and the evils in its train.
In Thy deep wisdom let us trace
This lost star hidden from Thy face.

Up from the primal fall Thou'st shown
The way of life to mortal breath;
To man's estate through leaf and stone,
From change to change, we've fought with
death;
Grant, with Thy last great gift of mind,
The prince of darkness we may bind!

THE DELUGE.

(After Washington Allston.)

SHROUDED in driving clouds, by sun forgot,
The darkened sky bends sullen o'er the wreck
Of the great deep whose fountains are released;
And gray lit waters burst against the gloom.

The murky waves wash on the wasted shore,
Strewn with wan corpses where the serpents glide;
And round the last spar of earth's wreckage writhes
A monstrous python, coiled in fold on fold.

Dark birds are flying 'gainst the low hung clouds,
Washed with the spray of the foundation seas;
And lone upon a summit in the midst
A stranded wolf howls o'er the desolate world.

Water and fire shall devastate thee, earth,
And the wild passions of man's untamed heart;
Till, of the types to which thou hast given birth,
All but the serpent and the wolf depart!

COLORS OF DARK.

CLOSE thou thine eyes and see
Deep in the deepest night,
What royal colors be
Wrought of the hidden light;

As on some stagnant pool
Leaf hidden from the sky,
In shadow deep and cool
Irradiant colors lie.

Deeper than day is night,
Deeper than life is death,
Beyond all brightness bright
Light which there entereth!

The sunlight's brilliant beams
Break in a thousand dyes,
Where rainbows cast their gleams
Of promise o'er the skies;

But brighter than the sun
In unseen light, I wis,
Whose colors float upon
The midnight's deep abyss.

Close then thine eyes and see
With thine own inward light
What gorgeous colors be
Blazoned upon the night!

CLOUD PICTURES.

THE curtains of the quiet room
Wave idly in the fitful breeze;
Far off the city's mellowed hum
Is murmurous as bees.

Across the heavens' perfect blue
By listless currents lightly blown,
Soft clouds bring slowly into view
The hosts of the unknown,

The long-forgotten souls outcast,
That yearn again for mortal birth;
Earth spirits wandering from the past
Back to their mother earth.

Where'er the vague cloud-headlands rise,
Wan spectres glide and fade again;
And some have walked in Paradise,
And some were yester slain.

Earth calls, defying time and death,
Her myriads to the haunts of day;
And all that once drew mortal breath
Still own her jealous sway.

THE STONE THAT THE BUILDERS REJECTED.

WISELY they toiled, the builders, fitting well
The granite blocks of equal shape and size
Cleft from one quarry, that to heaven should rise
A matchless temple where their god might dwell,
Worshipped above all gods of heaven or hell.

And as they wrought in that long vanished day,
Building with even blocks, a curious stone
Come to their hands, for which no use was known;
Not like the ones they used, nor shaped as they,
Uncouth it seemed and so was flung away.

No instrument had touched it; but from glow
Of earth's primeval fires 'twas flaming cast;
And cooling into rugged form at last
'Twas washed by many waters to and fro,
Shaped as the tide swings and the tempests blow.

No human hands its symmetry had wrought;
And they, earth blind, saw not how passing fair
This corner stone unlike all others there!
Saw not that all life's secrets it had caught,
And typified the thing for which they sought.

But when at length the pyramid had grown
In terrace upon terrace to the sky,

Lo, naught could fill the summit's vacancy
Till there they placed, majestic and alone,
Head of the corner, the rejected stone!

THE AUTUMN STAR.

THE Autumn leaves turn brown and sere
And drift to molder in the shade;
Down by the river's brink a fear
Creeps where the quivering rushes hear
The footsteps of the passing year
Go slowly through the glade.

His pipes are silent; in despair
Sits Pan amid the river reeds.
The wind blows back his unkempt hair
Across dank marshes, wild and bare;
The naiad lurks no longer there,
Nor faun his music heeds.

Lift up thy head, god Pan, and see
Among the stars in bright array,
The nymphs that mortal vales must flee!
The faun Capella beckons thee
To notes of wilder ecstasy—
Take up thy pipes and play!

DREAM.

*"The way to sleep is a sheer fall; only the long
return slopes are dream haunted."*

BESIDE the creeping seas I lingered, lingered,
Drowsed by the murmur of the lapping waves
And by the sinuous shifting of the mists.

Beside the abyss of sleep I lingered, lingered,
Lingered—and fell!

Swift as a plummet falls, my spirit dropped
Down the sheer sea wall of the deeps of sleep,
And swooned for unimaginable time
In night of unimaginable dark.

Then dawned a light that was not of the sun;
And from the surface of a quiet stream
That had been Time, but now had ceased to run,
Like morning mists there rose the mists of dream.

And step by step along the farther slopes
That lead up to the living world again,
I came companioned by the wraiths of men
And by the spent winds of their fears and hopes.

And, as one sees in crystalline deep tides,
Through coral caves the strange bright fishes go
Hither and thither as the current glides,
Fantastic visions flitted to and fro.

Flitted, and came again. Gleams mistily
Foretold the coming day. A pebble fell
And broke in shallow waves the lingering spell.
I heard the lapping, lapping of the sea,
And woke to earth's bright sunlight over me.

CURRENCY

Let us pay with our bodies for our souls' desire.

—Theodore Roosevelt.

O HIGH of soul, flesh doth not overwhelm,
But is the means wherewith all things to buy!
It is the coin current of the realm
Wherein we live and die.

Upon our far, strange journey to that home
From which we are astray,
The Providence that destined we should roam
Gave us wherewith to pay.

We shall arrive if nobly we aspire,
And, spending flesh to buy the spirit free,
Pay with our bodies for our souls' desire
For perfect liberty.

DIAMONDS.

WROUGHT of the sunshine and the winds and
rains,

And seething forests of the young world's birth,
The Chemist moulded in His Crucible
The diamonds of earth.

And on a night of uttermost deep dark,
Wild with the dashing of the turbulent seas
And the strange passions of the wind's desire,
From His high place within the highest arc
Of heaven, He cast the burning mysteries
That are the diamonds' fire.

They fell like star gleams on the riven crags
Of earth, and in her valleys and her sea;
And in the crevice where the torrent lags;
And where the desert sands perpetually
Blow to and fro; and where the eagle seeks
His eyrie 'mid the summits of the peaks.
And, buried in the underbrush and mould,
The ancient forests still their strange fires hold.

Few, few there were that flashing in the sun
Fell on earth's thrones; but waiting age by age
Still patient in the darkness of her mines,
In the great blackness how their glory shines
That are earth's heritage!

THE WINGED GLOBE.

HIGH in the light, Libra, the Wingéd One,
Guardeth the balance of the orbéd scales
That hold the sleeping serpent of the sun,
Coiled in its seven veils.

Nor wind nor any storm disturbs its rest,
Poised in the shadow of the brooding wings
That shield, as shields the mother on her breast,
The child to whom she sings.

Her singing is the music of the spheres
Crooned as the current flows, now high, now low,
And slumbrous as the cradle of the years
She rocketh to and fro.

Eternal Life is she—the parent pair
And she the offspring—ever three in one;
Wings of the Seraphim o'erspreading there
The chrysalis of the Sun.

And free beneath the eagle wings shall be
The coming and the going of the years,
That keep in rhythmic change the liberty
And balance of the spheres.

THE ROAD TO YESTERDAY

CLOSE by the path of every day
The winding roadway lies;
We breathe the incense of the dawn
Beneath the solemn skies,
And lo! cloud curtains lift and bring
Old scenes before our eyes!

A sound of bell on summer eve,
A breath of violet's bloom,
When touch of little clinging hand
Comes with the faint perfume—
And then the Road to Yesterday
Breaks shining through the gloom!

We catch a glimpse of snowy peaks
Above a shadowed vale;
Or down some mountain's sloping side
There bloom the wild flowers pale,
Or on the far horizon falls
A light on sinking sail.

Along the Road to Yesterday
Lie palaces of light
And windy caves in barren lands
Whereof no man has sight.
And strange moons round a stranger earth
Draw wild tides in the night!

The road leads over sunken seas
And stretch of desert sands;
The stars of long past ages shine
O'er wondrous twilight lands;
And there are long forgotten friends
Who once have clasped our hands!

ORION.

OUT of the ancient east he comes,
The radiant hunter, clad in stars:
Nor noise of war, nor beat of drums
The deep supernal stillness mars.
Above the shadow of his eyes
A starry helmet circling lies.

Infinite suns about him gleam;
Bright Bellatrix, with warlike ray;
And Betelgeuse, whose sullen beam
Was crimsoned in aeonian fray;
And Rigel, flashing at his feet
In fierce, white lightning, young and fleet.

Stars gem the bright sword at his side,
Forged in the fire of seething suns;
And round his strong loins, circling wide
A starry girdle flaming runs;
And leashed in silence, star with star,
There follow him his dogs of war.

THE ROAD OF THE RETURNER.

'TIS a long road and a lone road,
And the returner passes
Where snow and sleet cling to his feet
And Winter wind harasses;
And where the Summer sunshine burns
The dead and dying grasses.

Who would return, stems dark and stern,
The current of life's river;
The things he's learned he must unlearn
And give back to the giver;
And back and forth, 'twixt death and birth,
Must go alone forever.

'Tis a long road and a lone road,
For no companion passes;
And all the old remembered way
Is lost in wild morasses
Where pale lights lead the feet astray
Amid the dank marsh gases.

'Tis a long road and a lone road,
And lights burn blue and quiver,
Where rosy flame, the way he came,
In vanished days shone ever.
'Tis a long road and a lone road
And a road that joyeth never.

GIVE.

OF all thou holdest fast
While the years roll
There remains at the last
Never a dole;
All that thou givest thou hast,
Give all, O my soul!

Keep not in hoarded store
Treasures of mind;
Open each closed door,
Fling wide each blind;
Scatter like flame and more
Like flame thou shalt find.

Love fears not waste, nor theft,
Nor time's recall;
It leaves no place bereft
Where it may fall.
Give till no more is left,
Thou who wouldst have all!

FROM THE EAST.

WIND of the Sunrise Land!
Waft to me, wandering 'neath these western
skies,

A little of thy balm—the peace that lies
Where softly shifts the sand.

Breathe faint across the years
The fragrance of the spices, when the eves
Were bathed in dew, and swooning lotus leaves
Drooped with their weight of tears.

What mysteries vague and grand
Lie all forgotten where thy soft airs sleep!
Into my heart the long past memories creep,
Wind of the Sunrise Land!

A little while the haze
Seems lifted from the valleys; and the peaks
Whisper together in a tongue that speaks
Of long forgotten days.

So sweet, so passing sweet,
Thou wind of morn and spring! Remembrance
grieves ,
And drifts of gold and crimson autumn leaves
Lie gathered at my feet.

Wind of the morning's breath!
A moment, O a moment, let me feel

Thy magic 'mid the lotus leaves that heal,
O wind, the wounds of death!

Waft sweet dreams softly fanned
Across the long day's journeying forlorn,
To mine eve's twilight from my twilight morn,
Wind of the Sunrise Land!

INEFFACEABLE.

ALL that hath been shall ever be,
Nor any act or word be vain;
Engraved on time indelibly
And in the light all deeds remain;
For though God hath dominion, He
Cannot make void the past again.

Reverse the whirling wheel of time,
Retrace the pathway of the light,
And in old India's sunny clime,
Or ancient Egypt's darkest night,
We hear the temple bells a-chime
And see the altars burning bright.

Upon the moving screen the flood
Is still recorded fadelessly;
And we may stand where Moses stood
And vision of his Canaan see;
Or in some rare exalted mood,
May yet behold Gethsemane.

REMEMBRANCE.

IN a far land, Belovéd, a far land,
A lake lay blue beneath the Egyptian skies,
Where now beside the weary Raiyan sand
Muellah's desert lies.

In a far land and long forgotten day
The valley caught the overflow of Nile;
And I, who loved its lights and shadows, may
The mirage see a while.

Limpid and cool, the dewdrops of the morn
Lie quivering on the violets; row on row,
Swayed by the whispering zephyrs of the dawn,
The brooding rushes grow.

Wide fields of violets border all its ways
With azure blooms in odorous shadows deep.
The mist above the waters and the haze
I see again, and sleep.

The mist above the waters—one lone call
Of waking bird—the scent of violets—
And I who dream have once again known all
The weary earth forgets!

SAHARA.

MY life is like the hidden stream
That flows beneath the desert sands,
Whose sluggish memory holds a gleam
Of long past sunny lands.

Across the waste the camels glide,
The sands of centuries drift and blow;
And thrones are dust that rose in pride,
While I sleep on below.

O lands so fair! O sunny days!
Have ye forever vanished hence?
My soul flows on in deep amaze,
It knows not where or whence!

A million eons yet my stay
Beneath the desert sands may mark.
The memory of a single day
Will lead me through the dark.

ALL AWRY.

“DOST thou exact day labor, light denied?”
One asked in woe. No answer came; but,
hark,

A low and bitter murmur at his side,
“Mine eyes are open, brother, in the dark!”

TO THE MUMMY OF A KING WHO WAS
SLAIN.

O THOU who knowest both love and hate,
Pharaoh,
Rememberest when in royal state
Upon the goddess thou didst wait,
The priestess at the temple's gate?

The sun shone bright on cloth of gold,
Pharaoh;
And she was fair that would behold
The world without the temple's fold;
And thou wert high and thou wert bold,
Pharaoh.

Rememberest in this dim alcove
How soft the blue skies bent above
The roses in the temple's grove?
How long is hate, how brief is love,
Pharaoh!

The leopard's skin gave leopard's sight,
Pharaoh,
Unto the priest who, robed in white,
Before the altar day and night
Guarded the mysteries and the light.

And thou whose glance was stern and high,
How was it when thou camest to die?
Did the lone night wind hear a cry?
Went there a leopard swiftly by,
Pharaoh, Pharaoh?

THE FADELESS VISION.

THOU Autumn leaf, that as a dolphin dies,
In all the gorgeous hues of sunset skies,
I will preserve thee in some favorite book,
Between whose well-loved pages I may look
Often upon thy beauty, as today!

Spake then, within, the Seer's voice: "Nay,
Thou hast the deathless vision, go thy way,
And leave the fading shape to life's decay,
Which in its passing passion thou hast seen.
Gold is the leaf which yesterday was green,
And which tomorrow is but dust, and gray.
The vision is eternal; that which made
The vision is illusion, and must fade.
All things perceived that perish as time rolls
Leave their eternal imprint on our souls;
So, grown a part of that which may not die,
Pass with us into immortality."

THOTHMES THE THIRD.

OUT from the past thou hast looked for a space,
While the New World gazed on thine Old
World face,
In the pride of its power and its dust of disgrace,
Thothmes!

Out from the past but a single hour,
Thy blind eyes glance in their old time power;
The eyes of the living behold them and cower,
Thothmes!

And into the night of the ages gone
Thou fallest again with the touch of morn,
Thy dust to the dust from which it was born,
Thothmes!

Thy dust to the dust of the centuries there—
The sands and the centuries, wide and bare,
That gather and drift in the death still air,
Thothmes!

Over the desert rise scattered and lone
The obelisks, writ with the deeds thou hast done.
The sun rays fall on the rays of stone,
Thothmes!

From the twilight eves to the far sunrise
Mutely they pray to the pitiless skies,
In the graven record that time defies,
Thothmes!

“Lo, the battles fought and the victories won!
Behold, great Ra, the works I have done,
And cherish and honor thy glorious son,
 Thothmes!”

Between the banks of the drifting sand
The river sleeps in that twilight land,
By the stars of eternity solemnly spanned,
 Thothmes!

Faded and gray are the flowers that arrayed
The cerements royal in which thou wast laid—
Rudely disordered and dim and decayed,
 Thothmes!

And a wasp interred 'mid the rare perfume
Of the myrrh and spices that graced thy tomb,
Outlasts thy state and thy crumbling doom,
 Thothmes, Thothmes!

THE SOWER OF LIFE.

THERE goeth a sower forth to sow,
With both hands flinging the fertile seed
Wherever his wandering footsteps go,
By hill or valley, by river or mead.

Little he recks where the good seed fall,
Little he cares that they live or die;
And some bloom out by the garden wall,
And some in the ditches rotting lie.

And some on the mountain top are cast
Wide to the skies where the wild winds blow;
And some are caught in the burning blast;
And seaward some on the great waves go.

Little he recks and little he cares,
The heedless sower by sea and land,
For the wasted seed that are choked with tares,
Or the barren seed in the desert sand;

For the drowned out seed in the ocean tide
That sink to the boundless deeps below,
Or with the drifting flotsam ride
Listlessly ever to and fro.

Lord of the vineyard and the rose,
Gardener, take a little heed
Of thy careless servant, the sower, that goes
Wasting forever the precious seed!

EARTH MUSIC

THERE are Earth melodies akin to those
Celestial anthems sung
When John on Patmos Isle was lifted up
The angelic hosts among:

The murmur of the illimitable sea
That breaks along the shore,
The while beneath the moon the slow tides ebb
And flow forevermore;

The sound at noontide heard in quiet nook
Amid the city's strife,
Of that deep rhythmic monotone which tells
Of surging human life;

The pulsing of the wild blood in our veins
As round our hearts it swings;
And rune of wires whose viewless currents beat
Their vast imprisoned wings!

All these are chorals of Eternal Life
Whose glory all worlds sing,
Orb within orb, from inmost cycles here
To Heaven's outmost ring.

THE BIG TREE OF CALIFORNIA.

I AM that tree, millenium old,
Around whose heart recording rolled
The circling years, like sea waves graven,
That laid the centuries fold on fold. •

An unknown world of land and sea
Slept at my feet; and over me
The wise skies whispered of the wonders
That had been, and that were to be.

The thousand years of night did seem
To shroud the moon and starlight's gleam;
And in the dark the strange, wild nations
Passed on as shadows in a dream.

Across the world old empires fell;
A heaven was peopled; and a hell
Filled to the brim with souls that struggled,
And won a losing game too well!

Then on these western shores the sun
Rose as the circling planet spun.
And lo! while in the dark I'd slumbered,
The cycle of a world had run!

The new earth smiles; and murmuring waves
That babble over old, old graves,

Laugh in the sunlight; while the ocean
The long-drawn coast line laps and laves.

The stern sea-coast from pole to pole,
Still holds the waters in control;
But sunlit skies look far and whisper—
“Oblivion’s waves again shall roll!”

AT AMIENS.

COMES to my mind forevermore a vision
Far over land and sea,
Of troops that to encampment are returning
After a victory.

Back to the city, back to Amiens slowly,
In broken files they creep;
'Tis midnight, and the darkness is upon them,
And weariness and sleep.

They clutch the backs of heavy laden wagons
Filled with a ghastly load,
Whose creaking wheels, slow turning, help their
lagging
Footsteps along the road.

Too weak the horses, led by stumbling masters,
To bear them any more;
And slowly shuffling, drunk with sleep, and bleeding,
Returns the conqueror.

IMMANUEL.

STILL art Thou with me! White clouds of the
noon-day

Reveal Thy presence moving on before;
The stars of night, Thy fiery pillar guiding,
Still lead me as Thine Israel of yore.

I hear Thee in the wind's breath lightly moving
The blades of grass, the leaf upon the tree;
Behold Thee in the sunset and the dawning;
The trembling shafts of sunrise show me Thee.

From soaring heights I see Thy vast horizon
Sink slowly, slowly; circling in repose
The nearer plains, the far supernal mountains,
And that great mystery of the sea that goes

In slow tide waves about the world forever,
Obedient to Thy will unrestingly!

I hear Thee in the murmurs of the forest,
And lie within its shadow feeling Thee!

Lo! Thou hast guided me and strength hast given,
And courage, yea, and faith by night and day;
And now the long, long journey nearly ended,
Uphold me that I faint not by the way!

Still art Thou near! The silver trumpets blowing
Amid the wilderness at eventide
Summon Thine Israel to the night's encampment;
Lord, in Thy tarrying presence I abide!

THE GIFT.

S AITH God to men; "Ye may
Have what ye will, but pay!"
So paying its full worth
Man has possessed the earth:
Wealth bought by labor's stress;
Fame paid in happiness;
Knowledge acquired with ruth;
Wisdom exchanged for youth.

One thing we may not buy!
We know not when nor why,
But falling from above
About us, cometh love.
It stealeth in the heart,
A mystery apart,
And may not purchased be;
'Tis God's gift utterly!

LOYALTY.

"**A**H, tempt me not! Old friends are all I need,
I care not for the new and the untried;
Old voices, only, speak in harmony,
And unfilled be the place of those that died.
I go companioned by my memory;
Within my house of life the vacant walls
Whence one by one old portraits fall and lie
Crumbling to dust, attest my loyalty,
And emptiness the vanished past recalls."

Nay, hang new portraits where the dust is rife
About thy vanished dead; thy house of life
Needs all that love can give to beautify,
And hold thee loyal still to those that die.
Thou mayst not stay thy dead; the vacant space
People with life and love, lest devils replace.
Oh, deem not those unchanged that pass away
To life's green fields beyond this twilight gray
Where thou with thy remembrances dost tread—
They change, as all life must, thy deathless dead!
Then cease thy strife the tide of life to stem,
And change with grace so thou companion them.

Let the new faces gather at thy board,
And in new chalices old wine be poured;
Let other voices echo vanished strains
In whose new harmony old love remains;
And know the perfume passing from the rose
Abideth still in every bud that blows!

DROPPING THE BURDEN.

WE grow so weary of our human work,
The day long labor and the many deeds
Our hands have wrought;
We grow so weary of the cares that irk
Our restless brains, our bodies and their needs,
So weary of our thought!

Even as mill children sleep not at the mill
Where all day long they toil the hours away,
When dark is on the deep
And all the great wheels silent are and still,
Like these mill children, Lord, at close of day
We would go home to sleep;

Where nothing of our handiwork appears
And all surroundings shall be wholly Thine:
Thy boundless sky,
Unchanged through the illimitable years,
Thine untracked winds, Thy stars of fire divine,
Thy deep eternity!

FORWARD.

AFTER the battle patching up and healing
Go the great surgeons, making men again
Out of the fragments left by shell's explosion,
Out of the remnants left by shrapnel's rain;

Adjusting here a limb and there an organ,
New skin, new members, coaxing flickering
breath;
Renewing men, and to the reeking trenches
Sending them back to be the sport of death.

O Great Physician, healing all earth's wounded,
After life's battle bringing balm for pain,
Out from these bodies all outworn and broken
Let us go forth and come not back again!

The fight is fought, and won or lost the battle,
Let not our mortal injuries be healed;
Let us go forward in time's marching order
And fight the fight on some untrodden field!

RAINY DAY IN THE PARK.

A LONG the winding pathways lie
Gray pools of water in between
The pebbles, where the glint of sky
Reflected gray is seen.

And where about the ponds the sedge,
O'erladen, droops its heavy head,
The dull drops fall upon the edge
Of melting ice like lead.

Deep in the withered grass is heard
A rain bound cricket's cheerless cry;
And note of some far homing bird,
Beneath the desolate sky.

TO AN IDLER.

IF Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands
to do,
How busily your hands to fill he's kept supplying
you!
And if, forsooth, 'tis idleness we find the mischief in,
Why he is busier than you and guilty of less sin!

THE NOON HOUR AT ST. PAUL'S.

OUTSIDE in the noisy street
Come and go the hurrying feet;
But within the quiet churchyard
Noonday rest is passing sweet.

Here the sparrows chirp and peep
In the grass, and blossoms creep,
Nodding in the wind and sunshine,
Where the granite headstones sleep.

For a century have I
Lain here where the gravestones lie
Lichen-covered, old and gray,
Carved with names that fade away.

Green the trailing ivy swings
On the church wall where it clings;
And beyond the turf and grass
I can see the white clouds pass.

I can see the heaven's blue
And the glory shining through;
And on spire and vine and wall
The sunlight and the shadow fall.

Silent, passive, year by year,
These things watch I, lying here;
Waiting in a dream of peace
Till the long hours bring surcease.

*Ye who come at noon to rest,
Come with welcome as a guest;
But I pray you in your kindness
Heed the turf above my breast;
Tread not o'er me where I lie
With face upturned to the sky.*

A POET PASSES.

(Richard Watson Gilder)

“THE Dream goes with the Dreamer.” Nay,
not so.

Passes the Rose when mortal vision dies?
Shall we decree no tender breezes blow

Beneath wide alien skies,
Because none feels their lingering caress?

The whispering music is but breathed in vain,
With no wind-harp within the wilderness
To catch the wild sweet strain.

O Poet, O Interpreter, the dream

Remains with us who may not understand!
Across vast spaces may some radiant gleam
Reach us from that far land

Where thou hast gone, and make the darkness glow
That we may follow where thy feet have led!

“The Dream goes with the Dreamer”? Nay, not so;
The Dream is with us, uninterpreted.

JOHN-A-DREAMS.

O H, in the park walked John-a-dreams
With slow and measured tread;
The weary park, where round and round
The winding pathways led.
The sky was shadowy with cloud
And the crescent moon had fled,
And outside in the blazing streets
The lights burned green and red.

Outside along the blazing streets
The lights burned gold and blue,
And winked and glowed and flashed and reeled
As drunken lights might do,
The hundred thousand garish lights
That night and Broadway strew;
And in the park walked John-a-dreams
Where the grass was wet with dew.

All night within the park he paced
The paths that nowhere led;
And at the dawning came a voice
From the far white stars o'erhead:
"Whence comest thou, O John-a-dreams,
That passest with the dead?"
"I come from going to and fro
And up and down," he said,
"Upon thine earth, Lord God, whereon
I sold my soul for bread."

THE ALGAE IN BRONX PARK.

SLOWLY the fleecelike clouds drift by,
Lightly blown by the listless breeze,
In the infinite arch of the azure sky
That bends to the brooding hemlock trees.

Measureless life in the sky beyond;
And under the arch of the matchless blue,
Measureless life in the marshy pond
Where the spirogyra hides from view.

Here where the dying summer grieves
In the twilight eves of the year forlorn,
Under the pall of the drifted leaves
In the slimy ooze is the algae born.

Infinite life in the blue beyond,
Where the fields of the nebulae strew the sky;
And infinite life in the marshy pond
Where the old drowned leaves of the summer lie!

From the outer deeps where the worlds are born
To the inner deeps of the algae's cell,
Life calls to life in its primal morn,
And God makes answer, "All is well!"

THE VANISHED EARTH GODS.

THERE are no gods to hear us;
He hath taken our gods away—
The Princes of Air who hearkened our prayer—
And we have forgotten to pray.

The children scoff in the highways
And use His name for a jest;
And the high priests laugh and chatter and quaff,
And rule their lives like the rest.

He is not like us—He hears not,
Nor heedeth our uttered plea;
But the gods of the earth as mortals had birth,
And they were fashioned as we.

The god of the rains and the rivers
Was strong, and we served him aghast;
And we hushed our breath with the fear of death
When the lord of the night wind passed.

Messengers they, not judges,
Nor measured the right and wrong;
But they heard our pleas in the winds and the seas,
And were swift to answer and strong.

Or that our prayers were righteous,
Or that our prayers were amiss,

Little they'd care, the spirits of air,
They answered, and judgment was His!

Still is He far beyond us,
Master and spirit of light;
And they who were near and fashioned to hear
Are gone, and now it is night!

THE SHADOW.

TRAILED by the clinging shade it flees and fears,
Which mocks in shape each changing form and
face,

Up from the dark through all the creeping years
Life climbs earth's summits to the highest place;
And there, as in God's image man appears,
The glory sweeps his shadow into space.

O Death, intangible and dread of name,
Deepening in darkness as life's blaze grew bright
Along the rugged pathway that we came,
We know thee now our shadow in the light,
Cast by the whiteness of God's Sirian flame
On some far planet shining in the night!

IN CITY HALL PARK.

HE stands, a simple soldier, there,
Who deemed one life too small a fee
For him to give in that great strife
That made his country free.

And it is free! High o'er the din
And turmoil of the city's ways,
Lo! Justice holds her sword and scales
Above the land she sways.

The commerce of a giant world
Moves at his feet. Within his reach
The tongues of nations meet; the air
Is vibrant with their speech.

He sees where science delves and wrests
The rock ribs of the earth apart,
And fills, with teeming floods of life,
The arteries of her heart.

In sober garb and quiet mien
He stands; from out the western skies,
Athwart the calmness of his face,
The peaceful sunshine lies.

And while our land endures to reap
His sowing, memory shall not fail
Of him who died that she might live,—
The patriot, Nathan Hale!

THE DARK.

OH, blest is man who in these latter days
Hath been permitted by the gods to raise
Earth's ancient curtain of the dark, that blight
That fell like pestilence with every night!

Then in the deep pit of the moonless sky
Only the frightened stars went hurrying by
Above earth's midnight forests; and dark seas
Drew from the shrouding night their mysteries.

And rivers rolled in darkness, and lone heights
Lifted vain summits in the levelling nights
That wiped out inequalities of earth
As in reft hearts death leaveth level dearth.

So all these dark things in the darkness seemed
To be to earth as dreams which she had dreamed
In night time; while there stalked with blazing eyes
The nightmare beasts for hungry sacrifice.

Oh, blest is man who in these latter days
Hath learned the curtain of the dark to raise!
And may he learn, ere flits this human breath,
To raise at last earth's darkest curtain, death!

THE WRECKER OF THE HOSPITAL.

I HELPED to wreck the hospital
Where crippled children lay,
What time the building was condemned
And the white cots moved away;
And I learned that where the seer is
The vision is always.

I do not know what life and death
And sin and suffering mean;
But this I know through things I've heard,
And things mine eyes have seen,—
Earth holds indelibly the trace
Of all that once hath been.

I helped to tear the building down
That held in row on row
The tiny cots; and here and there,
Wherever I might go,
I'd catch a glimpse of baby face,
Or hear a weeping low.

I do not know what others saw,
Or others heard; but I,
Perpetually amid the din,
Heard some wee sufferer's cry;
And sometimes flitting in the sun,
A little shade passed by.

Sometimes I'd feel a gentle touch,
Like rose leaves from the skies;
And in quick vision fairy land
And gleaming towers would rise,
And breath of flowers, that gladdened through
Some sweet soul's ministries.

And once, amid a mighty crash
That seemed to rend the deep,
I heard a crooning lullaby,
And great wings softly sweep;
And then I knew that angels watch
Where crippled children sleep.

AT HALF MAST.

EARTH lowers its standard to thy shadowy one,
Conqueror of human breath,
But till we see thy banners in the sun
We yield no victory, Death!

Lord of this world and of this human form
Wherein our souls abide,
Thou hast but quelled the tumult of the storm
And stilled the surging tide.

Lo! unto Caesar what was given in trust
Is rendered up; in scorn
Life passes from thy kingdom of the dust
To wider empire born.

AT A WEST INDIAN OBSERVATORY.

THEN stood I with the watcher of the south,
Turning his glass upon the starry heavens
Nightly above the tamarinds and palms;
And saw the great suns flaming in the dark,
With crimson, emerald and cerulean fires
Blown by ethereal winds along the deep.

* * * Beheld amid the whirling nebulae
Of molten spheres in clouds of golden flame
The planets shaping on the Potter's wheel;
And clustered glory break in myriad stars,
Like fireflies glimmering in primeval dusk
A-down the twilight of empyrean fields.

* * * Beheld within the flying shaft of light
Flung by the Centaur to the flaming Cross,
Companion suns in one transcendent star,
Bound each to each by law that breaks nor swerves,
Burn through the night in azure, red and gold;
And that bright pendent jewel of the Cross,
That blazed upon God's bosom in the sky
Ere yet the world was made, reveal in fire
The ancient mystery of His trinity,
Great Alpha, throned upon his triple spheres
Above the darkness of the Deep Abyss.

* * * So seeing, stood in awe; and knew it is
The fool alone who in his heart hath said,
"There is no God!" Behold, the heavens declare
His glory, and the firmament shows forth
His matchless handiwork!

THE MELTING POT.

FLING them all in the melting pot,
Native, and strange to these harboring shores,
Where the scarlet fires are flaming hot
And the noise of the conflagration roars.

Foreigners, citizens, gather here,
Drawn by the light and held in thrall;
Moths that out of the darkness appear
To answer headlong the fateful call.

And some are lifted out of the ditch,
And some are dragged from the hills of pride;
The lowly and noble, poor and rich,
Seething and bubbling side by side.

And some bring thrift and brains and skill
And cast them all in the common store;
And some bring sloth and the sins that kill
That into the fusing caldron pour.

It levels them all like the leveller, death,
That brings to one semblance all who live;
And out of the furnace a common breath
To each that riseth again doth give.

Oh, well it is for the crawling beast
That is graded up from the slime of the town;
But alas, for the soaring dreams that have ceased
In the generous soul that is melted down!

ON THE FACE OF THE WATERS.

THE sunlight falls upon the lake
Where grasses on the margin grow;
And grasses in the wave below
A green reflected jungle make.

In light and shade the ripples run,
Where branches overhanging lie
Athwart the blue of mirrored sky,
And fret the gold of mirrored sun.

A bird of air hath perched at will,
And swings where drooping branches lave;
A mirrored bird within the wave
Swings with its motion, or is still.

It hath no will nor way alone,
This image in the waters shown;
But when the lengthening wavelets glide
Softly upon the quiet tide,
An indolent unrest they give
That makes the image seem to live.

Even so, I deem, is man a shade
By spirit on the waters made,
Illusion, under the control
Of circumstances and his soul:
His soul—the living bird o'erhead;
The circumstances—ripples spread.

A FROSTED WINDOW.

IT is free as the wind, the spirit,
And it shapeth itself as it will;
And here on the florist's window,
When the night is frozen and still,
It taketh strange forms of the forest,
And jungle and stream and hill.

Out of the viewless ether
It gathereth mistily;
Slowly shaping and forming
In blossom and vine and tree,
With a grace of unspeakable beauty,
And free as the wind is free.

It hath woven a crystalline jungle,
Scintillant, frosty and white;
Bamboo and palm and aloe
Glitter in magical light,
In an icy forest primeval
Under the stars of the night.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE SPRING.

(Born April 23, 1564.)

CHILD of the young world in her gladsome
spring,

Thy spirit comes perennially to greet

Her joyous wakening in the springtime sweet,
And wander with her where the wild vines cling
To bending trees above the murmuring

Of running waters where the mosses creep.

Nature is roused from her enchanted sleep
And speaks once more through thy interpreting.

O'er banks of bloom Sicilian zephyrs play;

The wavelets break upon the Danish shore;

In Arden's glades the happy lovers stray;

And sweet the heather scents the English moor.

O radiant Shakespeare, happiest born of earth,
Thou comest anew with every springtime's birth'

A CRIMSON FEATHER DUSTER.

WHAT wind of destiny has blown thee, little
feathered thing,

Whose spirit from dim spheres unknown crosses
my journeying?

Thy soul upon its wingéd way has vanished like a
gust;

Thy gorgeous plumage yet doth stay, lightly to lift
the dust!

THE SHAKESPEARE GARDEN IN CENTRAL
PARK.

"I KNOW a garden where the wild thyme grows,"
And marigolds are nodding to the bee—
Where mignonette and rambling sweet-briar rose
Mingle their fragrancy.

Azure and gold, above the blossoms, gleam
The fluttering butterflies; and, spirit-white,
One flits apart where water-lilies dream
In crystal shadowy light.

The scarlet salvia clambers up the rocks
In regiments, like red-coat grenadiers,
Above the wallflowers and the lady-smocks,
And blue-eyed widows' tears.

And by the waters where the bulrush meets
The emerald moss that on the margin lies,
In slender grace the tall papyrus greets
Its old Egyptian skies.

Sweet whisper zephyrs through the trailing vines,
Sweet is the music where the ripples run;
And over all in softened splendor shines
The everlasting sun.

AT NIGHTFALL.

(In Shakespeare Garden.)

NIGHT falls within the Garden of the Heart
With healing balm for every flower that blows,
And from its dewy chalice doth impart
New perfume to the rose.

Deep in the shadowy dells the falling brook
Drownses its murmur. Water-lilies cool
Sleep on the placid wave; while from some nook
A wood-rat seeks the pool,

Startling the reeds above a sunken star
It sets a-dancing in black depths profound;
And through the low grass cometh from afar
The cricket's chirping sound.

The fragrance of all blooms is borne upon
The rise and falling of the fitful breeze;
And deep in golden blossoms of the sun
Sleep the gold-banded bees.

O magic Night, that holdest in thy embrace
A rarer sweetness than is born of day,
How gladly doth the eager earth her face
Turn from the sun away!

THE SINGING ICE IN THE PARK.

WHERE the heaving ice floe hovers
Over the face of the lake,
And is swayed and rayed and rifted
By the winds that wild sport make,
There comes, when the ice is lifted,
Low music from every break.

There comes a soft, sweet singing,
As of birds in the winter wind,
Of happy birds low singing
In the bitter and biting wind;
As the scintillant, crystalline edges
Swing slowly, and shiver and grind.

And there, in the wide still distance,
With never a soul to see,
With a sweet and low insistence
The ice sings eerily
The songs of the birds in the springtime.
That nestle in field and tree.

THE SCOURGE OF GOD.

OUT of the Dark came Attila,
Yea, Attila the Hun,
Between the east of the sunrise
And the west of the setting sun.

And he slew where the Roman legions
Were feasting at their ease;
And he slew where the land lay sunken
In its lusts and its luxuries.

For the earth had need of his coming
Who was the Scourge of God—
The dread and terrible coming
Of the curse accursed of God!

And after the hour of blackness
Before the great sunrise,
A new world turned from its weeping
A shining face to the skies.

O earth, once more in stupor
Of wealth and ease and sin,
Again the Scourge comes trampling
To usher the new day in!

AFTER SUNSET ON THE HUDSON.

AGAINST the low light of the western sky,
The Palisades in shadowy rank on rank,
Like serried troops forever passing by,
Stretch to the north along the river's bank.

Above their summits storm clouds roll and run
As wind blown banners flutter in the night,
Sable and grim; through which the sunken sun
Sends, Parthian-like, a flying shaft of light.

And high in ambient air one gleaming star,
Shot like an arrow from the slender bow
Of crescent moon, speeds westward swift and far,
Unto Amenti where the dead suns go.

Forevermore the circling race must run,
Forevermore be war of day and night,
The victory of the shadow o'er the sun,
The victory in the morning of the light.

Be strong, O heart; be comforted, O world;
Ye that may hold no one fair thing, alas!
In God's great cycle even time is whirled,
And it, like all things, cometh but to pass!

THE BIRDS OF BRYANT PARK.

LIKE still drab leaves in the bleak drab trees,
While the rain falls gray, falls gray,
With your little heads tucked under furled wet
wings,
How passes the night away?

Have you thoughts akin to human thoughts?
Do you wake and list to the rain?
Are you cold, and hungry, and weary, and faint,
Till the daybreak comes again?

Or slumber you deep to the darkness of earth
With your spirits in uttermost light—
O little Ba birds, of a Dream that had birth
In the old Egyptian night?

The lamps in the street, how they flicker and flare,
By the wet winds washed and blown!
O little drab leaves, are you dead up there
Till the soul comes back to its own?

AN INCIDENT IN FLANDERS.

ALL day, through scream of shot and shell,
Upon the Belgians fighting well
The blazing summer sunshine fell.

Slowly the sun sank, round and red,
Its bloody light on blood pools shed
Where lay the dying and the dead.

Bravely the great king stood at bay,
The foremost in the battle's fray,
And thirsted at the close of day.

Then, seeking water, his aides see,
Tethered beneath a distant tree,
A worn horse drinking eagerly;

And deeming that no creature durst
Drink while their monarch was athirst,
They seized the pail. But—"Let it first

"Finish its draught! Its suffering
Perchance is greater; and then bring
The drink to me!" So spake the King,
Albert of Belgium.

IN A VACANT LOT.

ALL overgrown with weeds and grass
The open lot neglected lies,
And o'er its wild blooms flit and pass
Like spirits, white-winged butterflies.

In heaps scrap-iron lies here, thrown
From train sheds and old railway tracks,
Its rusty red with grass o'ergrown
And green weeds peeping through the cracks.

And long discarded semaphores
Eternal guardianship now keep,
Where signal no more lifts nor lowers,
And tie-vines round them curl and creep.

Landward the listless seabreeze blows,
And sways a mimic forest made
By tall weeds soaring rows on rows,
With leafy vistas in their shade.

And here, all through the Summer day,
Free in their own wild habitat,
Three little kittens leap and play
About a happy mother cat,

Who all unaided wins her food*
Wherever she may seek and find,
And bravely rears her little brood
After the fashion of her kind.

Unhampered they by hope or fear,
That comes not to the like of these,
Who may not see across the year
The snow fall on the Summer's trees!

A CRY IN THE NIGHT.

THOU Angel who "prevented the king's sin,
And help the little ant at entering in";
Who knowest no great in His domain, nor small,
Seeing that in His hand He holdeth all,
Great Angel, heed this little lost one's call!

The cry of the despairing in the night,
Hither and thither hurrying in affright;
A homeless creature left to starve and die,
It prays as men pray in their agony,
For all our prayers are but a bitter cry.

Thou Angel, flying from the starry skies
To gather in thy hands the prayers that rise
From least and greatest, bend a pitying ear
Unto this least one in extremity,
Lest any think there is no God to hear
Nor any Judge to see!

MAMMY.

(It has been proposed to erect in Washington a statue in memory of the old Southern negro Mammy.)

DEAR brown hands that smoothed with care
The tiny frocks and rumpled hair;
That gathered scattered toys from where
They were left strewn on floor and stair!
(Swing low, sweet chariot!)

Dear homely face, so patient grown
In furrows from the cares she'd known—
The cares of others, not her own—
While the long years had backward flown!

Dear heart, so loyal, loving, true,
To all the children as they grew
From babyhood to youth, and knew
Their infant world from Mammy's view!

Her voice melodious, soft and low,
Had caught the crooning ebb and flow
Of wild sea currents as they go,
'Neath wind and sunshine—wistful, slow.

So quick to sympathize and teach—
Wisdom, not knowledge, was her reach;
Prompt to reward or punish each
Good deed or error; quaint of speech!

Nature's own guiding rod she bore;
And taught us all her race's lore
Of truth and legend, and a store
Of marvelous things undreamed before!

Not hers to question things that be;
Content to hold her life in fee,
She had the simple faith to see
The Wonder and the Mystery.

(Swing low, sweet chariot, low, low!)

TO AN ANCIENT SLEEPER.

THE river winds like molten glass
Amid the fields of waving grain,
And Indian echoes haunt the plain
Wrapped in the Indian summer haze;
They whisper in the rustling maize,
And speak from out this mound again.

Thou, who art one with all that was
And all that ever shall remain—
Surely thou hearest through the grass
Hither and thither my feet pass,
Seeking the spot where thou hast lain
These centuries of sun and rain!
I may not see thy face, alas!
But free earth touches grain to grain
And links a current 'twixt us twain!

MEDUSAE.

(The attraction of light in the spring brings up from the sea bottom hosts of medusae or jellyfish.)

CALLETH the Light at wakening of the spring-time—

“Arise! Arise! My children of the sea!
Loosen your bondage to the ties that hold you,
Break from the deep—arise, and come to me!”

They come in hosts, the sea’s bright-eyed medusae.
Shy and young souled, by pulsing movements sped,
Up from long arms and tentacles that hold them
Among strange shapes upon the ocean’s bed.

High o’er the surface of the air’s deep ocean,
The Voice calls to us: “Ye who blindly seek
Life which is light—come upward, O my children!
Leave the earth bottom, where the highest peak

“Pierces in vain the immeasurable waters,
And never island from the wave breaks forth;
Dim shapes ye move among, my sons and daughters,
Come up to me and know the true life’s worth.

“Ye who have eyes, the time has come for seeing!
Ye who have ears, the time has come to hear!
Come from blind deeps and know the full of being,
The rounded orb, the music of the sphere!”

Up from the deeps, advancing and receding
By heart's diastole and systole—
The Light that calls our seeking instinct leading—
Do we go forth, we Children of the Sea!

WOODLAWN.

A FAIR, white city, o'er whose quiet streets
Life everlasting broods! No jarring sound
Mars its sweet restfulness and long repose.
The Summer sun lies softly on its ways,
Where flit white butterflies from bloom to bloom,
And soft cicadas chant amid the trees.

There is no evil there, nor sin, nor death;
But lights and shadows of His perfect peace
Who stoops and lays His benediction on
The congregation gathered in His sight.

Then falls the dew of evening on the grass,
With odor of sweet flowers; and all night long
The winds of Woodlawn whisper 'neath the stars
The mysteries of the coming of the Dawn.

FROM THE TALMUD.

“ONLY the grave dust covering it at last
Man’s eye can satisfy!” So saith the Word.

When Alexander, conqueror of the earth,
Approached the gates of Paradise and knocked,
The Guardian Angel, with uplifted brows
And glance unrecognizing, questioned him,
“Who knocks?” To which the king responded high,
“I, Alexander, chiefest of the world!”
Whereat the Angel slowly smiled and said,
“We know him not. This portal is the Lord’s;
Only the righteous enter here. Depart!”
Then Alexander all abashed, replied:
“Give me, I pray, a token showing men
That I have reached the gates of Paradise,
Though may not enter!” So the Angel gave
A tiny bone, the fragment of a skull.
Then Alexander went back whence he came
And showed it to the wise men of his realm,
Who, weighing it, discovered all the gold
And silver heaped upon the other scale,
His costly jewels, ay, his diadem
That Alexander placed were but as air
To the small fragment of a human skull,
This bone about the eye! Thereat a sage
Esteemed the wisest gathered at the throne,

Stooped to the earth and laid a grain of sand
Upon the bone; and lo, the scale flew up!

“Only the grave dust covering it at last
Man’s eye can satisfy!” So saith the Word.

FAITH.

THE night is dark and wild!

O soul of my little child,
My little baby child,

Stay—stay!

Thou little helpless one,
Out in the great unknown
How canst thou find alone
The way?

But the voice of the little soul,
The sweet voiced little soul,
Back through the silence stole
To say,

“O mother of mine, alone
I came from the great unknown;
Came I not unto mine own
Straightway?”

THE WATCHER AT THE GATES.

“**N**AY,” said the Angel, “Thou art all unfit
To enter here, who lovedst not thy race
While yet on earth; how canst thou then expect
To share their joys in Paradise, and kneel
With them, as worshipper before the Throne?
The bowers of Eden bloom for all alike
Who enter in; wouldst thou a special place
To draw thyself apart and dwell alone?
Here music is the music of all tongues
In harmony, and every heart akin!
What wouldst thou in thy loneliness and pride?”

Thereat the Soul made answer, speaking low
In humbleness: “Dread Lord of Paradise!
I was a stranger to thy flocks and herds,
I was a wild thing tamed not to their ways,
Nor grown unto their liking; so I kept
My soul apart, and made myself a path,
And lived my life as creatures of the wood,
None harming, passing onward, but alone;
Freed from the bitterness of hateful strife
Through mingling with Thy creatures not akin.

“I seek not joys within the City Gates
Celestial, where the alien saints abide;
But grant, I pray Thee, some green slope low down

ON THE ROUSETOP.

SERENE at sunset on the roof
I watch the daylight passing by;
The cares of earth have sunk abashed
Beneath the perfect sky.

All sounds have mingled into one
Deep rhythmic murmur, far, subdued,
As if the city's pulsing heart
Beat in the solitude.

Beyond the level roofs a sail
Creeps slowly over sunset seas;
A mist is on the evening hills,
And night amid the trees.

Far overhead a homing bird
Flies dark against the changing sky,
Now lost in cloud, now plunged in fire
Where lakes of sunlight lie.

Half shrouded in the harbor mists
Earth lights come twinkling into view;
As one by one majestic stars
The fields of heaven strew.

A PEARL OF THE FAITH.

After a conflagration in which three firemen lost their lives three goldfish were found unharmed in the ruins.

*"Praise Him, Al-Mutahali! whose decree
Is wiser than the wit of man can see!"*

HE is the Reckoner, and He counteth all
His creatures, be they great or be they small;
He balanceth and weigheth, counting all.

When, in that seething pit, He, ruling Death,
Let three men perish in its flaming breath—
Three valiant men—He, ruling Life and Death,

Kept all unharmed beneath the cindered mass,
Three tiny goldfish in a globe of glass,
That lived and frolicked 'neath the cindered mass.

Lo! He doth see, Almighty and All-wise,
That which is hidden from our wondering eyes—
Why these should live, those perish—O All-wise!

EVENING AT CAMP MILLS.

THEN, when the day was ended, I came home,
Leaving the pageant to the sunset faded,
And camp fires kindling in the growing dusk.
The pungent wood smoke blew across the field,
And curling gray wreaths veiled the evening star,
High sentinel—lone in the amber sky.

Lingering, I heard a far off bugle call
And sound of music wafted on the breeze,
And cheerful voices by the clustered tents
Where soldiers spoke and jested comradewise,
Partaking of the fragrant evening meal.

In rows on rows the canvas dwellings lay
Beneath the vaster canopy of sky,
Where down long lanes the far tents fade away,
Lost in the hovering darkness utterly.
Brood of the Eagle! Summoned loud and clear,
From every eyrie are ye gathered here
On this far island by the eastern shore;
From the sad South I shall behold no more
In all the changing glory of the year;
And from the marvelous city lying near;

And from the West, beyond whose mountain chains
In majesty the great Pacific reigns,

Holding for man unborn its priceless boon,
With golden gates flung to the sunset wide!
And from the Great Lakes with their ocean tide
Rising and falling 'neath the swinging moon,
Whose changeless changes evermore abide.

A night ye rest, O children of the Sun,
Beneath the shadow of His brooding wings!
And with the new light of the day begun
Ye shall go forth as conquerors and kings—
Yea, as the sons of God, go forth to war!
And would to Him that I were where ye are!

OLD YOUTH.

YOUTH, that was first of all,
Oldest it is of all,
Back of the elements, winds and the tides.

Age, that is last of all,
Youngest it is of all,
Younger and younger the longer it bides.

HORSES.

IN the gray shades where horses' spirits go
They spoke together after mortal woe.
Said one: "I came from where a boundless plain
Swept the horizon, by wild armies slain;
Shot full of arrows, as the red sun fell
My last shriek mingled with the savage yell."

Another spoke: "I came from tossing seas
Where, herded in dense masses, knees to knees,
A troop ship bore us to a mighty war.
Over wide waters, speeding fast and far,
Doom came to us. Upon the ocean's floor
Amid old wrecks our bones lie evermore."

And then a quiet voice, subdued and sad,
Spoke slowly: "All the wasted strength I had
Was spent in the long service of the street.
Day after day I lifted weary feet,
Slipping and falling; on an icy dawn
I left at last the wagon I had drawn."

THE UNEXPECTED.

ONE mocked at death, for being strong of limb
And fearless, death no terrors had for him:
"From out my course I shall not move a jot,
Let him approach at will; I fear him not!"

Yet, when the conqueror whom he thought to meet
As man meets man, erect upon his feet,
Came creeping in long twilight shadows, he
Fell on his knees and writhed in agony.

Another, not self-confident but frail,
Feared death from his youth upward; e'en would
 quail
At every shadow which upon his path
Seemed pointing toward him in its sombre wrath.

Yet, when death came, not wrapped in lengthened
 gloom
As all life long this man expected doom,
But sudden in the sunlight, not a trace
Of fear remained; he met him face to face.

THE LAST SEAL.

YOU have covered the sea with your navies;
You have mined the solid earth;
You have used the fire for your desire
And given great engines birth.

But for ages the air has tempted—
Has mocked and laughed to scorn;
Since the old scheme of Da Vinci's dream,
And the hopes of the young world's dawn.

Now the trumpet sounds the breaking
Of another seal, O man!
For your hands have wrought the thing you've
sought
Since first the world began.

You have knocked—and to you 'tis open;
You have sought and it is found;
You have burst all ties in your will to rise,
O scorner of the ground!

And the earth shall signal greeting,
To the commerce of the sky—
As with flags unfurled above the world
The ships of air shall fly.

THE ARCHETYPE.

IN desert places and in fields and woods,
Chameleons take the hues of rocks and trees;
And sponges to their moorings shape themselves
In the slow swinging of the languid seas.

The waves assume the colors of the sky,
Rosy at dawning and at close of day;
Ethereal blue beneath the arch of noon;
Black with the midnight; with the storm cloud,
gray.

And standing in the Presence on the mount,
Upon whose peak the flaming angels trod,
Lo! gazing on the Light unspeakable,
The prophet's face gave glory back to God!

So, growing like to what we look upon,
Let us seek beauty wheresoe'er it lies;
And let our casements to the hills be flung
And to the wide seas and unfathomed skies;

That, looking out, our souls become more vast;
And, looking up, our spirits grow more rare;
And with our minds intent forever on
The fair in nature we grow also fair.

AT A MENAGERIE.

HELD as prisoners in a cage
Evermore to grieve or rage,
See where furled and folded lie
Great wings fitted for the sky;
And where wild sweet forest songs are
Muted in captivity!

In a far-off corner shrinks,
Scornful, proud, a captive lynx;
A wild wood creature brought to bay,
Keeping all the space he may,
In his cage's little distance,
From our curious gaze away.

A lone dog from the Cape replies
To a wild hyena's cries;
And in narrow circle bound,
A honey bear walks round and round,
Pacing out the weary moments
With nose pointed to the ground.

FROM THE DARK.

L ORD of this world since wind and tide
And changing aeons came to be,
Waft from the skies the clouds that hide
The stricken earth from Thee!

From where Thou sittest, throned in Day,
Beyond these nights of blood and pain,
Thou seest we seek Thy perfect way
And that we seek in vain.

Thou seest the nations bloom, and fall
Before the scythe like Summer grass,
The strength of men made naught, and all
The piteous pageant pass.

Behold, the children of the Sun
Are tempted with ignoble ease,
And those Thou settest Thy seal upon
Still ravage earth and seas!

We tread so blindly the way,
Lord of the reaper and the grain—
Oh, flash through whirling clouds some ray
To make the long road plain!

GUNDA'S PRAYER.

(For two years, Gunda, the elephant in the Bronx Zoological Park, was chained to the concrete floor by two legs, unable to move more than a couple of feet from the one spot.)

THE time is long, Lord God, the time is long!
From the gray dawn to twilight evensong,
From evensong until the break of day,
Year after year, lo, captive kept alway,
I may not move but as Thy great tides sway!

The time is long, Lord God, the time is long!
And I would roam my trackless wastes among;
The tempests call, the sunshine beckons me,
The deep pools in the jungle lands I see,
And I am restless, longing to be free.

The time is long, Lord God, the time is long!
That I am punished who have done no wrong;
Chained in slow torture and dull agony
For idler's gaze, or child of man to see,
Whom Thou hast given dominion over me!

The time is long, Lord God, the time is long!
For death releases weaklings, not the strong;
And I, thus helpless in captivity,
Was strong and swift and great as creatures be,
And living thus, gave glory unto Thee.

The time is long, Lord God, the time is long!
Hear Thou my prayer, O Maker, who art strong
And mayst deliver in extremity!

I pray as all Thy creatures pray to Thee—
Hark Thou my prayer, Lord God, and set me free!

A WEST INDIAN SABBATH.

A CROSS the blue sky soft white clouds are
sailing,

Below me spreads the iridescent sea;
And o'er the cliff sweet blow the zephyrs, wafting
Cathedral melody.

So sweetly soft upon the green earth falleth

The Sabbath stillness of God's perfect rest,
As though His spirit in the silence brooded
With wings upon its breast!

Through arch beyond arch of azure vaulted heavens
Rising in sunshine over earth and sea,
"Let not your heart be troubled," comes the mes-
sage

His angel bears to me.

"Lo, in my Father's house are many mansions,
And where I am there may ye be also!"

O we of little faith, hath He not shown us
The Way that we must go?

Along the bank the purple sage is blooming,
The scarlet salvia flashes from the grass,
And manna from the bread-fruit tree is falling
Around me as I pass.

AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR.

"FATHER, mine hour is come! The twelfth
stroke falls,

I faint before Thy Throne amid the snows!
Here at Thy feet the burden I lay down—
A heart, all deep despair and bitterness,
For deeds undone that I was given to do,
And many a battle lost upon the way.
My strength diminished to this feeble end,
Weary and old I die; my youth's fair dreams
Forever vanished in this cold, gray mist;
The firs and hemlocks, black above the snows,
Like shades of passions spent, environ me;
Sorrow alone remains, and vain regret,
Remembering the promise of my spring!"

Down from His Rings of ever-circling Light,
Stooped pityingly the Lord of Life and Time,
And laid His touch upon the dying Year.

"Beloved, rise! I give to thee again
Thy radiant youth, more glorious than of old;
Sweeter and wiser, stronger with each death,
For the endeavor and the burdens borne
From cycle unto cycle! Go, once more,
And love and strive and conquer! Thou art Mine
And Mine the Event, and I will not forsake.
Lo! in the East thy star shines! It is Morn!"





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